British Columbia
Ministry of Transportation
Staff Newsletter

Road Runner

Online: http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/roadrunners/index-roadrunners.htm Spring 2004

People make the difference

Submitted by Kevin Richter, Regional Director, Northern Region

I personally and on behalf of our many satisfied clients and customers, would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Field Services assistants, assistant project supervisors, supervisors, assistants to the managers and managers for the exceptional service you provide.

All of you play a key role in our ministry and contribute to our successful achievement of the Ministry's goals and objectives. With your dedication and devotion, you have successfully delivered all the capital, rehabilitation, oil & gas and heartlands projects with which you have been tasked, as well as making an incredible contribution to achieving our early tender goal.

I recognize and I thank you for the personal sacrifices you have made, being away from your families and working tirelessly to make the projects succeed.

You are experts in the field and, as such, our partners, the BC Road Builders and the Consulting Engineers of British Columbia, look to you as leaders. I applaud you for your work in facilitating the de-

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Fletcher Bay on Kootenay Lake, as seen by the ministry's own Ron Wiebe, Project Information Officer in Prince George. Ron has lots of photos from around the province, and he's shared some with us. Look inside for more.

...and it was a Golden move!

Submitted by Arthur A. McClean, Roads Area Manager , Rocky Mountain District, Golden

In the fall, after ten wonderful years in Victoria with the ministry's Snow Avalanche Program, I moved my family up to the Rockies to start a new position as Roads Area Manager in Golden.

I'm not sure what prompted such a move: smaller town, more snow, mosquitoes the size of CF-18's, maybe all of these. Regardless, I knew my children would have the opportunity of many firsts in Golden and that was very encouraging.

The snow came early and frequently this year with the first major snowfall coming in the middle of November. I'm told that we had more snow this year than Golden has seen in the last five years. We had a white Christmas for the first time in seven years (remember the snow at Christmas '96 in Victoria, anyone?).

My son Alexander celebrates his birthday just after Christmas in early January. We decided to hold a toboggan party at a local hill close to the house. We investigated the site a week before the party to find the snow soft and moderately fast. Warmer temperatures came that following week, turning our tame hill into an Olympic caliber luge facility.

I brought in the heavy guns to test, approve, and monitor the hill.

With about 16 children, all under the age of 10, scampering over the hill, this was an event needing both traffic management and conflict resolution skills. Murray Tekano, Senior Project Direc-

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Field Services: A job well done

(Continued from page 1)

velopment of best practices and striving for consistency in our practices. To everyone in Field Services, thank you very much for a job done exceptionally well.

— Kevin Richter

The people who make it happen:

Rick Adams
Gerry Allen
Brian Atkins
Ross Bain
Brian Barnes
Barry Bergstrom
Bob Biagoni
Gordon Blackey
Joe Bowlby
Chris Brot
Laurie Bullivant
Keith Callander
Mike Castrucow
Ron Chadwick
Stef Condotta
Neil Creed
Bill Crichton
Ken Cullen
Ken Doll
Fred Downer
Paul Eftodie
Mike Farynuk
Tom Fehr
Randy Fowler
Brian Gallagher
Jim Gallagher
Ken Gallagher
Al Goddyn
Bob Gourley
Jason Jackson
Rick Hundt
Dan Harris
Bradd Hogg
Glenn Hoffman
Jim Helgeson
Dave Hawksworth
Rhonda Haslett
Dan Harris
Steve Jagdeo
Dale Jeffery
Mike Johnston
Al Jones
Jeff Jones
Osmo Joronen
Doug Kidd
Gord Kilian
Rolf Kortegaard
Lionel Lafrance
Vondie Larsen
Greg Loewen
Doug MacKay
John Mackay
Keith MacNeil
Rick Marven
Rick Matthews
Wayne McCarvill
John MacKenzie
Mike McLaren
John McNee
Terry Murphy
Tom Murphy
Bob Neville
Mike Newton
Wayne Nordstrom
Bill Ogmundson
Rob Ostrikoff
Richie Pastor
Bob Penner
Bob Petho
Ugo Porco
John Ross
Dale Ramsey
Len Romanow
Geordie Robertson
Brad Rikley
John Reddin
Ken Read
Randy Rattray
Marion Sapergia
Al Scharien
Glenn Schwemler
Brad Scott
Mike Scott
Don Shaw
Rod Shaw
Greg Shea
Cam Shearer
Bill Shovar
Paul Shul
Mel Smith
Dave Solberg
Udo Sommer
Rob Stephen
Gary Stewart
Simon Stubbs
Rob Sylvester
Steve Szabella
Pat Taylor
Dan Templeton
Brian Twiname
John Ure
Arnold Van Reekum
Dan Voykin
Al Wall
Don Ware
Gary Watkinson
Karen Westlund
Don Wharf
Wes Yuckin

Those moving on to other adventures:

Dennis Dodsworth
Jim Deutsch
Wayne Fraser
Steve Johnston
Armando Porco
Terry Robinson
Ron Thompson
Gordon Walter
Tom Waring

And gone but not forgotten:

Ed Ryan

A Golden move . . .

(Continued from page 1)

tor for the Kicking Horse Project, and Jack Bennetto, District Manager of Transportation in the Rocky Mountain District, offered decades worth of project management, slope stability evaluation and skid test analysis skills that would prove to be invaluable. I knew I could count on their professionalism to solve any problem we might encounter.

(Below left) I was sent down first (rookie initiation?). My technique did not match my speed, but I made it in one piece.

(Below right) Murray Tekano came next, offering improved aerodynamics and slightly greater speed

(Right) Jack Bennetto was next, deciding on a steeper slope, using a style all his own.

It was a great day — and the children had fun, too!!!

Carol Espey's son a Parksville hero

Saves woman from burning home

Carol Espey, District Clerk in Nanaimo, has every reason to be proud of her son, Doug.

Doug will be receiving a Carnegie Medal for heroism in rescuing a female senior citizen trapped in her burning home in August 2002.

Doug kicked in the rear door and carried the burning woman out through the carport just before the roof crashed in, and along with his grandfather extinguished the flames on her.

Before rescuing the woman, Doug had kicked in the front door and helped a man out of the house.

Both seniors survived.

The Carnegie Hero Fund Foundation honours civilians who risk their lives to an extraordinary degree while saving or attempting to save the lives of others.

Doug is one of 18 North American recipients of the Carnegie Award and will receive a $3,500 US grant and a bronze medal.

Congratulations to a "homegrown" hero and his proud mom!

Julia Vaughan and Jeff Wiseman promoting the ministry's Adopt-a-Highway program.

Volunteers take up the challenge

Across the province many volunteer groups are beginning to adopt and beautify sections of our highways.

Ministry staff are in the process of identifying potential areas for corporate/business sponsorship. Site photos will be used by the marketing company in the packages they are developing to spark interest and facilitate program adoptions.

Shown here is Jeff Wiseman, Operations Manager, Penticton and Julia Vaughan (retired), Properties and Business Management Branch. Julia is sporting one of the Adopt-a-Highway safety vests.

Party 'Cariboo style'

Submitted by Margie Henley

Jack Jeyes, Ron Baerg and Roger Hlina retired from the Cariboo District on March 31, 2004. Their dedication to the ministry, its staff and the members of the travelling public will certainly be missed, as will the camaraderie!

Ron Baerg and Jack Jeyes received Meritorious Awards for their exemplary service of over 30 years. As Maurice LeFrancois is relocating to the Southern Interior Regional Office, we thought to include him in on the fun.

Roger Hlina and Maurice were presented with all the hair they lost while in the Cariboo. A great time was held by all.

Changes in the Northern Region

A banquet was held in Prince George on March 12 to honour two of our valued colleagues who recently opted for retirement. About 50 people attended.

Kathy Bernsohn has led a fascinating life which has included many travelling adventures. With her husband Ken, she's travelled far and wide on holidays and on major family moves.

After graduating from university as a microbiologist, Kathy packed her bags and left California for the great white north. In mid-career, Kathy went back to college to learn computer technology, joining the ranks of the ministry (and later CITS), where she served as one of our computer gurus for more than a decade. Always willing to tackle any problem, Kathy's keen sense of customer service will be sorely missed.

Bernie Daenckaert spent most of his ministry career working with surveying crews in locations all around the province. After 32 years in the business, you can imagine the many stories recounted at the retirement soirée! A group of the former "location branch" crew were on hand to share the many laughs and memories.

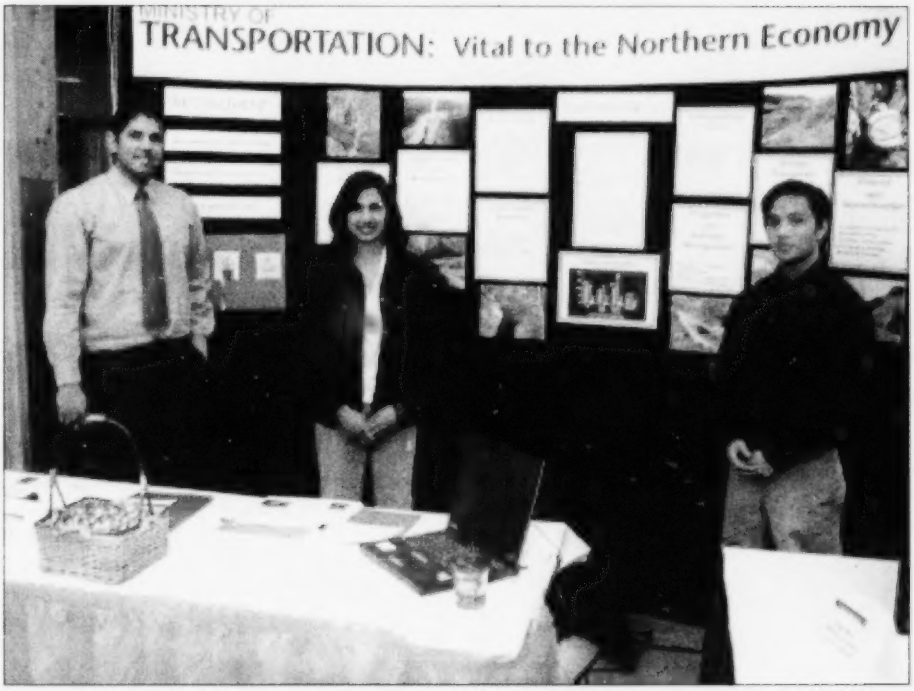
Kathy Bernsohn

On St. Patrick's Day, Kathy and Bernie were joined at a regional luncheon by fellow retirees Miles Webster, Ralph Turner and Bill Ewart. From all of your colleagues in the Northern Region and throughout the ministry, we wish you all the very best in your newfound life of leisure!

Also recognized on this occasion were two members of the Northern Region's management team. Tracy Cooper spent a short time as our Regional Director, while Grant Lachmuth had been DMT in Fort George for a number of years. Both have accepted new positions in the Southern Interior Region. Good luck, guys!

Career fairs in Prince George

Submitted by Nini Long, Engineer In Training



Left to Right: Ashok Bhatti (MDP), Nini Long (EIT), Dennis Nguyen (EIT)

Among the various tasks that were assigned to me when I returned from my maternity leave in February was organizing our ministry's participation in the college and university job fairs in Prince George. My primary cohort in organizing this event was Heather Narynski, who has a great eye for vital details and is a real joy to work with. In the process of compiling material for the presentation, Heather and I actually learned a few things about the ministry. The intranet site proved to be a very useful tool for conducting research on our organization. We found a wealth of information about the various branches within the ministry as well as an excellent photo gallery and video clips.

Our main purpose for participating in the job fairs was to increase the ministry's profile and to pitch some of the new programs that the ministry is recruiting for. The Technician Entry Level Program (TELP) and the Management Development Program (MDP) are two of the newest recruitment initiatives that the ministry has developed. These programs are loosely modelled after the Engineer-in-Training Program, which has been in place for over thirty years. The hiring process for TELP and MDP is currently underway and will soon be completed for this year.

Although we were approached by some students interested in our programs, it seemed that overall student attendance at the fairs was significantly down this year. I wasn't able to determine the reasons behind the decline. Many of the students who were in attendance were primarily interested in summer employment opportunities. We also found that the majority of students who approached us at the College of New Caledonia were interested in information technology jobs, so we didn't have a lot to offer them.

Surprisingly few students inquired about the TELP program, but we later discovered that class sizes in the Engineering and Design Technology program are drastically reduced this year. The viability of this program is questionable at this time. This may be a result of the depressed forest sector, which is the largest employer for graduates of this program. At the University of Northern British Columbia, we had some interest from students in the faculty of Commerce who would qualify for the MDP program but, again, we were disappointed with the level of student traffic we saw there.

In conclusion, I think our attendance at the job fairs was viewed positively. Although we didn't meet as many students as expected, many people came by to ask general questions about our organization and about some of the projects we had depicted in photographs. Others just came by to steal Easter eggs. It was obvious that most people were not aware of the extent of our business practices and the employment opportunities that our ministry can provide.

It was a great team effort to co-ordinate our presentation in a short time frame, but I believe it was worthwhile and very enjoyable. Thanks so much to everyone that helped out: Heather Narynski, Shannon Jares, Karen Andrews, Glyn Briscoe, Curt Watts, Dennis Nguyen, Ashok Bhatti, Gordon Hunter, Pat Egan, Wendy Herring, Ken Aura, Kim St. Peter, Ron Wiebe, Lori Sutton, Gordon Smith and Gordon Bonwick.

Byers bids farewell

It was with a mixture of joy and sadness that colleagues, friends and family gathered together on together on January 17, 2004 to celebrate the next chapter in Darcy Byers' life.

Those of you who have had the privilege of working with or for Darcy Byers will be able to appreciate his devotion to the ministry for the last 35 years.

Darcy and his wife at the celebration

He started with the ministry on March 9, 1970 and after a short training period in Burnaby, he was assigned to Prince George as the Regional Paving Branch's Lab Tech. In November 1972, he entered the Engineer-in-Training Program and worked in various branches of the ministry in such places as Kamloops, Clearwater, Rossland, Houston, Terrace and Saanich. In June 1974, he was relocated to New Westminster and held the position of the District Technician.

With DM Dan Doyle

During his time in New Westminster, he spent six months on secondment as the acting District Highways Manager in New Denver. In 1975, when he returned from New Denver, he became the Regional Maintenance Manager in Burnaby.

He was appointed as District Highways Manager in Merritt in October 1978.

In June 1985, he was appointed the District Highways Manager in Nanaimo and then became the Regional Manager of Operations in Nanaimo in February 1989.

Rounding out his career, Darcy was appointed as Director, Marine Branch, on July 1, 1997.

Although Darcy has retired from the ministry to work on his "other projects," he will always be remembered in the ministry. Not because he keeps returning to bring treats to his ex-colleagues and friends, but for his colourful and descriptive attire, his wit and sense of humor, his eagerness and incredible ability to learn and retain knowledge, and his ability to remain calm during turbulent times.

Well, what more can we say about "the Darster" except . . . "free, free at last."

Just hanging around . . .

Gord Chudleigh, Bridge Area Manager in the Rocky Mountain District (Cranbrook), makes fall protection training look like a flying lesson for the circus. Keep your feet on the ground, Gord!

Dave Shibata (a.k.a. "Shab"), Systems Technician in Kamloops, is a new dad! Emma was born Saturday, March 27 at 6:30 pm. Everything went well.

A note from the editor:

Over the past months we've been saying "so long" to many of our colleagues and longtime friends. They leave behind within us the knowledge and skills they've helped us develop, as well as memories and friendships we've come to treasure. We wish them all well in their future endeavors and adventures. We hope all of you will keep in touch. If any of those who have left the Ministry of Transportation would like to be on the distribution list to be advised when a new issue of the Road Runner is available, let me know.

Again, I have to thank everyone for their input into this issue of the Road Runner. Many articles, photos and ideas have been submitted unsolicited, a great sign that the Road Runner is becoming 'your' newsletter.

Cindi

1st annual Deputy Minister awards

Whether it's daily maintenance to provide safe roads and bridges, meeting the challenges of emergencies or improving transportation infrastructure to support industry and economic development, it is our ministry's goal to provide excellent service to all highway users in British Columbia. It's a very big job, and it involves some very large challenges.

Part of the ministry's way of doing business is to partner with the private sector to successfully deliver the work that needs to be done to keep transportation infrastructure competitive, cost-efficient and safe.

Ministry staff assessed recommendations and nominations from the regions and brought forward recommendations to Deputy Minister Dan Doyle for his final selection. Beverly Van Druten-Blais, a graphics consultant with Engineering Branch, designed the medallions on the plaques presented to the award winners.

Following are the recent recipients of the Deputy Minister's Awards in both the consulting engineer and contractor categories.

Consulting Engineer Awards

Project Supervision: McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd., for Cecil Lake Road Slide repairs.

Design and Contract Preparation (Roads, Bridges & Structures): Westmar Consultants Inc., for Thompson River Bin Wall.

Specialized Services: SNC-Lavalin Inc., Owner's Engineer for the Sea-to-Sky Highway Project and AMEX Earth & Environmental Ltd., for South Taylor Hill, geotechnical engineering of the waste site.

Deputy Minister Contractor Awards

Grade and Bridge Construction: Bel Pacific Contracting Ltd., for the Sea-to-Sky Highway, Culliton Creek project

Paving: DGS Astro (Interoute Construction Ltd.), for Highway 37, Nass River Bridge to Hanna North Creek

Road and Bridge Maintenance: Caribou Road Services, Service area 17, Williams Lake

Development approvals: renewal in action

The Development Approvals staff from throughout the province met in Kamloops during the first week of March for the first time since the late 1980s. The group was charged with developing solutions to meet the challenges the Development Approvals Team is facing in business changes and renewal.

The workshop planning started with two groups sharing ideas. The first group was Jim Hester's Planning Department, consisting of David Fisher, Manager of Development Approvals, and Adrian Vander-Velden, Development Approvals Coordinator. The second group was the Provincial Approving Officers, spearheaded by Leslie Elder, PAO from the Peace District. The workshop idea quickly became a group effort.

It was a challenge to get everyone in one place at the same time and a total of 54 out of 63 Development Approvals staff attended. Conflicting workloads presented a hurdle but participants persevered and were committed to meet the challenge before them.

The workshop was facilitated by members of the government-wide Practise in Facilitation community, David Glockzin and Erica Taylor from the Public Service Agency, Barb Scott-Zowty from the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, and Denise Bollinger from the Ministry of Transportation.

Denise Bollinger, David Glockzin, Erica Taylor and Barb Scott-Zowty

The workshop started with an afternoon for guests speaking about the different aspects of our Development Approvals programs and initiatives, both new and existing. The speakers were Jim Hester, Director of Highway Planning,

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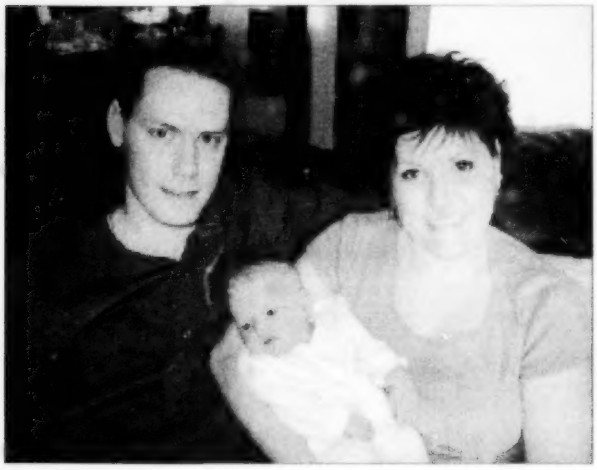

Kelly Orr welcomes Kira Dawn

Kelly Orr (Executive Administrative Assistant to Highways Department ADM John Dyble) and Craig Randle welcomed Kira Dawn Randle to their family on April 3. Kira weighed in at a healthy 9 lbs. 5 ozs.

Vest awarded to Greg Galpin

District Manager Transportation Bonnie Whipple presents Area Manager Greg Galpin with the Customer Service Award vest. Greg is the third recipient of this prestigious award in Vancouver Island District.

Workshop hears service is key

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Julian Malinsky, District Business Manager from Thompson-Nicola District, Dave Byng, Executive Director, Properties and Business Management, and Don Ference, Consultant with the Utilities Standard Committee.

The remaining two days of the workshop was facilitated in the "Open Café" style.

It took hard work to get everyone together but the Development Approvals workshop was very well attended.

The morning of the next day involved the group bringing forward issues, prioritizing and categorizing them into categories of Subdivisions, Zonings, Permits, Reclassification and all other aspects of Development Approvals and any combination of issues.

That afternoon, John Dyble, Assistant Deputy Minister, Highways Department, met the group and spoke about the direction the ministry is heading, emphasizing customer service.

The District Transportation Managers, District Operations Managers and Regional Directors then joined the workshop and participated with much of the discussion.

During the final day of the workshop, the group broke into teams to develop solutions and plans of action for implementation.

These teams each selected a representative to accompany David Fisher to present their team's work to the management group assembled in Kamloops for a Highways Department provincial meeting. The work presented was well received and management support was obtained.

Finally, this report cannot be complete without acknowledgement and thanks to the ministry's Cindi Trowbridge and Kelly Orr for their excellent help in arranging the workshop logistics.

Relationships with First Nations

On the fourth floor at Headquarters, two staff of the Properties and Business Management Branch (PBMB) have their desks loaded with First Nations issues from around the province. The First Nations unit is primarily responsible for ensuring that reserve land acquisition, legally required consultation, historical research and timely negotiation of outstanding First Nations issues reflect the constitutional and evolving legal framework and are in accordance with the applicable federal and provincial framework, policies, standards and procedures. The unit also ensures a consistent approach across the ministry with respect to consultation, accommodation and treaty issues.

A master carver continues work on one of two totem poles being created by the Sliammon Indian Band and funded by the Ministry's South Coast Region.

Garth Stewart recently joined the branch from the Ministry of Attorney General, Aboriginal Litigation and Research Group. For a number of years before that, he acted as a consultant to the Ministry of Transportation. Garth's years of experience in research and litigation of road tenure through Indian reserves and his good knowledge of First Nation issues will surely help him keep steps ahead of the piles of issues that greeted him on his first day in the office. PBMB staff welcomes Garth back to the ministry in his role as Provincial Coordinator, First Nations Policy and Research, where his experience and keen outlook will prove invaluable in dealings with First Nation issues.

Garth will be working with Nick May, Senior Manager, Properties, First Nations Policy and Research. They will be working with the two newly appointed First Nation Coordinators in Kamloops, Karl Klingbeil and Mark Collins.

Over the past few years, Nick has been integral to the Ministry regions and districts in achieving a number of successes in building business and community relationships with First Nations. This year, Nick will be receiving a MoT Recognition Award for excellent leadership in community relations and leading the ministry in the development and implementation of the Ministry of Transportation's Consultation and Accommodation Guidelines. Take a look at just a few examples of the partnerships between HQ and Regions involving First Nation issues.

On the Saanich peninsula, a road agreement with Tsawout First Nation settles an old issue and provides road access that meets the needs of the Tsawout community and assists them in their residential/commercial development. Chief Allan Claxton and community members are delighted with the new road and the work of the Ministry to overcome a long process with the Department of Indian Affairs to secure the necessary permits to complete the deal.

In Boston Bar, a road agreement will give the ministry administration and control of Green Ranch Road through Kopchitchin I.R. 2 in return for monies to pave the First Nation's residential subdivision.

Other benefits to the First Nation include safety signs, no post barrier, an access gate, and when available, road grindings and millings to be used to supplement dust control on the road to the Boston Bar First Nation campsite.

The newly constructed 2.1 km sea walk in Powell River, a project of the Sliammon Indian Band and the Municipality of Powell River, will soon display two totem poles funded by the South Coast Region, part of the Ministry's consultation and accommodation efforts. Visible to tourists arriving on the Sunshine Coast ferry, the carved totem poles, benches, interpretive signs will reflect the history and indigenous heritage of the area and explain the significance of the archaeological resources in Powell River. The ministry is pleased to improve its community relationship with the First Nation and contribute to the cultural enhancements of the sea walk, which will result in increased tourism opportunities for the Sliammon Indian Band.

An agreement in principle has been reached with the Squamish and Lil'Wat First Nations that paves the way for employment, training, and

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IPR Branch: Who are we now?

The Information, Privacy and Records Branch (or Freedom of Information Branch as we were known then) was originally established in 1992 to help prepare the ministry for the implementation of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. We have been through a number of changes since then and we thought it would be timely to introduce you to our current team.

The staff of the ministry's Information, Privacy and Records Branch.

Beth Pitblado, Manager of Recorded Information, is responsible for the ministry's records management program. Beth is our officially designated Ministry Records Officer (MRO to those in the know). Beth has been very busy over the past year working on a number of initiatives, including the pilot implementation of the new government standard enterprise document and records management system, TRIM (Total Records and Information Management system).

Beth's records management background is complementary with her interest in genealogy. She has been researching the Pitblado family history and has had responses to her website from Pitblados as far afield as Cyprus and Argentina – pretty good considering that Pitblado is actually a Scottish name!

For much of the past year, Beth had the wonderful assistance of Vicki Nygaard to provide records management support services. While Vicki was originally on a temporary assignment with us, we are very pleased that she has now joined us on a permanent basis. Many ministry staff will know Vicki from her years of service at headquarters in the Marine Branch.

In our Information and Privacy Section, Analysts Jeff Thom and Laura Coward are responsible for managing the majority of the FOI requests that we receive (more than 150 in 2003). Jeff has been with IPR since 1995 and is an avid weekend golfer. Laura has been with us since January of 2003 but has considerable

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Relationships with First Nations the work of MoT Properties branch

(Continued from page 9)

economic development opportunities for the First Nations in return for support for the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project. Based on case law that provides direction to government to consult and accommodate the interests of First Nations, support from the First Nations was required. With First Nations' support and involvement, the Sea-to-Sky Highway project will now be able to proceed.

A recently signed agreement in principle between Canada, the Ministry and the Boothroyd First Nation will lead to a final resolution of costly and uncertain litigation regarding Chaumox Road through Speyum I.R. 3 across the Fraser River from Boston Bar. Chaumox Road connects to the Nahatlatch Forest Service Road and provides the only access to the Nahatlatch Valley and beyond.

In the coming year, look for the branch to continue to work with major projects, regions and districts and to support the ministry in building relationships with First Nation communities, resolving road tenure issues, and assisting in the areas of consultation, accommodation and treaties.

If you want to know more about what Nick and Garth are doing, give them a call or visit the PBMB.

They would love to sit down and discuss road tenure negotiations, treaty negotiations support, First Nation issues management, road research, First Nation consultation and accommodation, utilities on rights of way, property appraisals, surveys . . .

A staff of professionals keeps information flowing smoothly

(Continued from page 10)
ministry project experience, having worked with the VIHP, CCRP and Coquihalla projects. Laura has the distinction of being the only professional forester and biologist in the branch.

Our newest staff member is Elizabeth Horn. Elizabeth joined us from the Ministry of Finance in March as our Information Access Coordinator. This is a new position created following the retirement of Analyst Linda Wardell. Elizabeth previously worked with us on a temporary assignment and we are happy to have her back, not least because of her background as a pastry chef.

We always look forward to her participation in our branch potlucks! Among other things, Elizabeth is responsible for assisting ministry staff in tracking down historical or other information required for research, litigation or other purposes.

Sherry Stubbings is our administrative coordinator and FOI request tracking clerk. Sherry joined us last year from Writing Services and was previously with Properties and Business Management Branch. Like Elizabeth, Sherry is no stranger to our branch, having worked with us back in 1993. Sherry is an avid golfer too and is known to brave the greens on days when most of us would stay inside!

For the past few years, Denise Browne has provided us with additional administrative support. Denise has been instrumental in helping us meet our FOI deadlines by ensuring that FOI response packages are copied and assembled quickly. She has become a master of our "antique" severing photocopier and knows just where to kick it to make it work.

Our director, Peter Smith, has been with the branch since 1992, but was first employed with the ministry in 1979. In his spare time he enjoys working on projects around the home and over the past few years has been building a sundeck. He anticipates completing it in time for the 2010 Olympics. Like Beth, Peter is interested in genealogy but is having a hard time sorting out ancestral "Smiths!"

Things You Didn't Know about IPR

Most staff know that IPR is responsible for records management and freedom of information. However, there are other initiatives and projects that IPR staff are involved with that you may not be aware of:

Did you know that IPR provides information and privacy services to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF)? Last year we processed more than fifty FOI requests on behalf of MAFF. Many of these dealt with aquaculture initiatives, particularly the licensing and management of salmon farms. MAFF FOI requests frequently involve extensive consultations with the Ministry of Water, Land & Air Protection, Land and Water BC Inc. and the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Did you know that IPR also has many of the ministry-specific reports and studies that were formerly held by the ministry library? These reports are held in off-site storage but can be retrieved for ministry staff on request. By going to our intranet website at http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwfoi you can find out how to access listings of the general office files, ministry reports and listings of all ministry records in offsite storage facilities. Go to records management/procedures/records storage/scanned accession files.

If you need assistance in locating records required for research or litigation, please contact Elizabeth Horn at 250 387-6844. If you have general questions about our branch or our services, please contact Peter Smith at 250 356-1107.

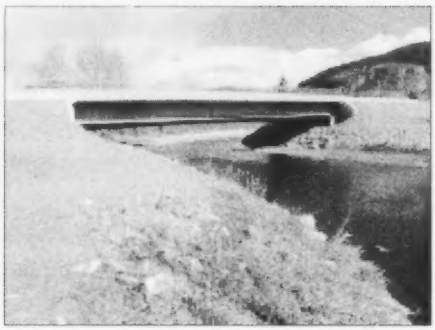
Customer Service Excellence: On Feb. 4, Mark Pratt received an award from South Coast Regional Director Wayne Keiser for his excellent customer service. Congratulations and well done, Mark!

The Bulkley-Stikine District has a wonderful asset in Marlene Keehn, Operations Assistant. She received her 15-year service pin during their March staff meeting. They hope she is around for 15 more years, as they would be lost without her.

McAlpine Bridge ~ then and now

Submitted by Reg Lawrence, Project Manager

Then



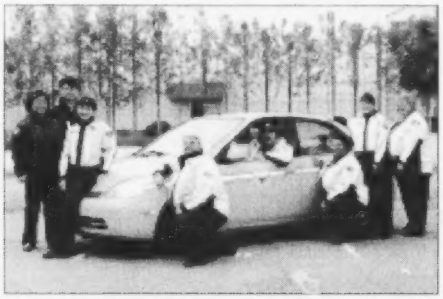
Now

There is a time when every bridge needs to be replaced. That time was 2003 for McAlpine Bridge No. 0363. Located on Highway 97, approximately 11 kilometres north of Oliver, the original wooden structure was tired and needed to be retired.

The $1.5-million construction contract was awarded to Cumming Construction Ltd. of Penticton, BC. In order to maintain the existing highway alignment the ministry purchased a two-lane Acrow bridge to provide a temporary detour downstream of the existing structure. The Acrow bridge is now part of the Southern Interior Region's inventory. Construction of the new bridge began in June and was completed in December. Coordination and communication of activities were made interesting as this portion of Highway 97 forms part of the bike leg of the Subaru Canada Ironman held out of Penticton each August. Liaison with event coordinators included their input into deck surface material for the Acrow bridge. As texture was important for traction purposes as competitors reach speeds in the 60 kilometre per hour range, the ministry purchased metal deck panels with an epoxy embedded gravel surface. This proved to be a successful choice.

Welcome back!

Submitted by Dennis Cha, Manager, Motor Carrier Branch



After a four-year hiatus from the Ministry of Transportation, the Motor Carrier Branch has returned to the ministry with renewed enthusiasm and direction.

A major focus of the branch will be the on-road enforcement of the Motor Carrier Act and regulations.

Five full-time and one acting Inspector of Motor Carriers will carry out enforcement activities by participating in road checks, focused inspection team blitzes and special motor carrier investigations.

The majority of these inspectors bring a vast amount of knowledge and experience to the branch with years of service ranging from nine to 29 years. The branch also welcomes to its ranks its newest Inspector, Richard McCarthy, who joined the Motor Carrier Branch in February 2004.

Richard transferred into the Motor Carrier Branch after 22 years with the Ministry of Children and Families, where he was a Peace Officer working with troubled youth.

With his background knowledge and experience, Richard will be a great asset to the team of Motor Carrier Inspectors and the Motor Carrier Branch.

Happy anniversary, MV Balfour!

Submitted by Malcolm Copeland, Captain, Kootenay Lake Ferries

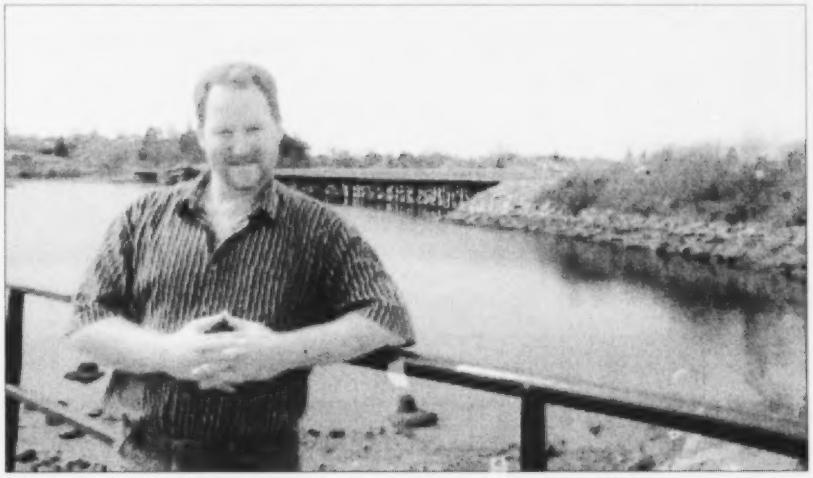
2004 marks the 50th anniversary of service for the Motor Vessel Balfour, the longest serving vessel in the Ministry of Transportation's inland ferry fleet. It carries on a service enjoyed by thousands of tourists to the West Kootenay.

The MV Balfour has sailed between the terminals at Balfour, in the West Arm of Kootenay Lake and the east shore at Kootenay Bay as a summer-season vessel or as a back-up to the retired MV Anscomb and now the MV Osprey 2000, during the closures of Highway 3 through Kootenay Pass.

The MV Balfour now sports a blue and white colour scheme, matching the Osprey's second-millennium appearance, but still retains wooden doors and brass trimmings, reflecting her 1950s launch date.

Community spirit drives Lidgate

Paul Lidgate, one of the writers in Corporate Writing Services at the ministry's headquarters, has been appointed to the City of Victoria's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee. Earlier this year, the city invited people to apply for positions on a variety of committees, and Paul decided to put his name forward.



Writer Paul Lidgate sees an opportunity to give back to his community through city committees.

The committee work is on a volunteer basis, with meetings about once a month and sundry other meetings, activities, calls and so forth in between.

"I spent years as a reporter writing about the work other people were doing to make their communities better, and I've worked in a support role for some of those folks. I still do," said Lidgate. "Even in my home-based business, my efforts are primarily geared to support other people's efforts. But now that my wife and I have bought our first home in the city and we know we'll be settled for a while, it's time for me to give something back to my community."

Lidgate noted that local parks and recreation matters may not seem earth-shattering to most people. But he added his experience has taught him that local government and community organizations may have a bigger impact on our day-to-day lives than all the big provincial and federal news stories that get so much attention.

"The neighbourhood streets you drive down, the shopping mall you buy your clothes at, the park you walk your dog in and that new subdivision you love to hate are all the result of city council decisions," he said. "And those decisions follow lengthy processes that include public hearings, letters from residents, phone calls to councillors and, yes, reviews by volunteer advisory committees."

Lidgate said he believes parks, recreation and community events develop the spirit and can help make cities into vital, vibrant places.

"World-class events, such as the Commonwealth Games a decade ago or the Tall Ships Festival coming in 2005, make Victoria one of the great cities. And I believe activities in places such as Beacon Hill, Royal Athletic and Topaz parks, which provide year-round opportunities, make Victoria's residents better people."

Lidgate quipped that he's done his share of squawking and whining about any number of things that happen around him, "but just as often, I've been amazed at the care and concern shown by people who give their time and energy for little more than the feeling of accomplishment. Great things happen every day in our communities, and I'm excited about being given the chance to do my part."

Lidgate's appointment to the committee was effective in March and runs until the end of 2004.

Ross Coates celebrates retirement

On March 10, ministry staff bid farewell to Ross Coates during a celebration at the Queen Victoria Hotel in Victoria. The retiring Richard Dixon was also honoured. Ross started with the Ministry of Transportation in May 1983 as a Bridge Design Engineer for the Bridge Branch in Victoria. In August 1984, he became the Bridge Inspection Engineer. In December 1988, he became the acting Director for Major Projects within the Planning and Major Projects Branch, and in September 1989, he won the competition for the position. When that position became redundant in June 1993, Ross was placed as the Project Manager of the Mud Bay-to-Courtenay section of the Vancouver Island Highway Project. In January 1998, he became the Project Director for the Okanagan Lake Bridge.

Ross Coates retired from the ministry after more than 20 years of dedicated service. Celebrating in March, he is seen here with his wife Chris and his brother Ian.

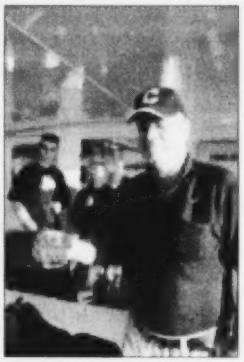
McKinley offers news from the Shire

Submitted by Shawn McKinley

"How ya going?" A new expression I've picked up since leaving the ministry and moving to New Zealand. It replaces "How ya doing?" and contrary to popular belief, New Zealanders don't all look like hobbits.

The people here in New Zealand are a lot like Canadians: they're friendly, open and honest and most go out of their way to make you feel at home.

It has been an interesting transition from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. Everything here seems to work in reverse.



The water drains opposite to what I am used to, you drive on the other side of the road, and even pass one another on the opposite side when walking down the sidewalk.

Driving on the other side of the road wasn't really as much of a challenge as I anticipated. It was more difficult to learn to walk "across" the road, as for the first while I kept looking for oncoming traffic in the wrong direction (left, not right).

I clued in after a couple of close calls between me and a front bumper. For those of you who know my passion for golf, there are four golf courses within 10 minutes of where I live, and another is being built and I can golf all year.

I'm living in a tourist town (Taupo) of about 25,000 regular inhabitants and there are only three stop signs and one set of traffic lights. Instead of stopping traffic, at every intersection they have "give way signs" and/or "traffic circles" (Dirk Nyland would love them).

Traffic seems to flow smoothly and there are few if any accidents and traffic jams.

Real pavement is scarce as most of the roads are made up of sealcoats applied one on top of the other, usually to a depth of four or more inches.

There are "no passing zones" on hills and very sharp corners but everywhere else it's up to the driver to make sure there is enough room to pass safely which makes for some interesting driving.

It has been interesting to learn that although so much is different, solutions to road, drainage and maintenance issues are very similar. Because I am Canadian and have experience with snow roads, I have ended up managing probably the only road on the north island that gets snow.

I work for a consultancy (Opus International, which is always looking for talented people) and although our primary business is road management on behalf of the state government, every day offers new challenges in a variety of areas due to the growth of the business.

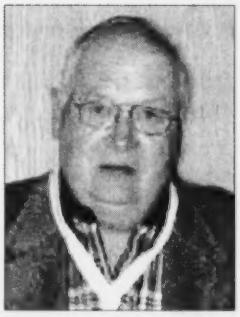
Our office staff, for the 12th year in a row, won the "top office" award for being the best office in the entire company. It was a new experience to be part of an award process where the entire office got to charter a fishing boat and had a complete evening with meal, fishing and drinks provided and paid for by the company. It sort of gives you something to aim for.

Moving to New Zealand has been a great move, just like moving to B.C. was years ago. I have been able to adapt and use the knowledge and lessons learned from B.C.'s Ministry of Transportation in my work, so I encourage all of you who may feel down or unappreciated now and then to look forward and take advantage of opportunities as they come up, because the experiences and skills you are gaining with the ministry can do you well in your future.

Shawn McKinley has just been appointed Opus' Taupo Manager. He started with Opus in January.

Ralph Turner retires

The Bulkley-Stikine District has said goodbye to one of its own, Ralph Turner, Roads Area Manager.



Ralph started with the ministry in January 1976 in Allison Pass, working in the camp as a boiler man, gradually moving up to equipment operator, construction foreman at times, then shift foreman around 1984. Ralph moved from the Allison

Continued on page 15

Richard Dixon active at work & play

Retirement to free up time for family, community

Richard was born in Strathroy, Ontario as one of four children and the only son of Clarence and Isabel Dixon.

The early years saw many moves as his father was with the military and stationed in various – mostly eastern – locations.

Always a good student, Richard earned an engineering degree from Waterloo and then did two years of post graduate studies in Transportation Planning before moving to B.C. in 1975.

Through his job with the ministry, Richard met Sherry, whom he married in 1979. September of this year will mark Richard and Sherry's 25th wedding anniversary.

Richard was an excellent fastball player and pitched for many years at the recreational level in Heywood and McDonald Park, although he started and ended his career in the government league.

For the past several years Richard has been a driving force in the annual Coquihalla Softball tournament which has been played in Nanaimo.

Their team, the Assfaults, always has lots of fun and is one way Richard keeps his sports career chugging along.

Although Richard and Sherry have both always been active in our community, they did find time to have a family. Scott was born in 1984 and Erik born in 1987.

Richard Dixon and his wife Sherry have been married for nearly 25 years and have two children, Scott and Erik.

The desire to put something back into the community led to Richard becoming a volunteer with Lakehill soccer, where he has contributed in many executive positions for the last decade.

Richard has always been an outgoing individual respected by friends and co-workers alike. As he moves to the next chapter in his life, we hope he will continue playing bridge and working on his golf game.

Ministry's renewal site updated

At the Provincial Renewal Delegate meeting last October, delegates identified that the People Plan (Renewal Plan) website required updating. Since then, the site has been revised, updated in its entirety and given a whole new look.

Check out the People Plan website in its revised version at http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/Content/PeoplePlan/home.asp. Take the time to check out the new "Wellness" link.

No-nonsense approach made Turner a valued part of the district's team

(Continued from page 14)

Pass Camp to the Tatogga Highways Yard in late 1984 and after a couple of years in Tatogga, Ralph moved south to Meziadin Camp.

Between 1986 and 1988, Ralph spent his time in the North Coast area, including Terrace, the Nass Valley and back to Meziadin Lake Camp.

Finally, in 1988, Ralph moved to Smithers and took on his Area Manager role in the Hazelton – Kitwanga foreman area during the maintenance privatization. Ralph was assigned many day labour projects, often with low budgets, limited time and late in the season. He had a talent for assessing the work and converting the needs into equipment.

In his direct and no-nonsense way, Ralph's projects were always completed, despite the stringent policies and restrictions in place, even if the financial staff often had to scramble to keep up.

Ralph's commitment to customer service, project delivery and road maintenance programs has been consistent and deeply valued by the staff and residents of the Bulkley-Stikine district.

On April 3, a retirement dinner was attended by over 50 friends. Ralph will be staying in the Bulkley Valley, and we at the Smithers office expect to see him often. He will be sadly missed. After 28 years, we wish him all the best in his "retirement."

Sahota, Blaschuk & Davidson round out their careers in style

On Monday, March 22, a retirement luncheon was held in New Westminster for Allan Davidson, Regional Manager, Planning and Partnerships; Surinder Sahota, Regional Project Manager; and Charlie Blaschuk, Regional Operations Technician.

The ministry is proud to have had these dedicated gentlemen in their employ and wish them a happy and healthy retirement.

Charlie Blaschuk – 27 Years of Service

Charlie Blaschuk was born in Hamilton, Ontario and is the oldest of three children. He has been married to Linda for seven years and between them they have five children ranging in age from 18 to 34, and eight grandchildren.

Charlie attended McMaster University in Ontario and began his working career working on ground crews and airborne crews for a geophysical exploration company. Most of that work was in northern Canada with stints in the United States and Brazil. He also worked as an underground assayer at the Granduc Mine near Stewart, B.C.

In 1977, Charlie joined the ministry, working in the Dease Lake District as a machine operator, which allowed him to gain experience operating snow plows, loaders, graders and more. While producing winter abrasives at Bob Quinn Lake, he managed to roll a dump truck from the top of the stockpile, damaging the truck beyond repair and, prepared for his walking papers, was surprised when the road foreman thanked him for making it possible to upgrade to a new truck much quicker than planned.

After that the crew joked and assigned him the oldest piece of equipment in hopes that he would transform it into a new and improved model.

Allan Davidson, Charlie Blaschuk, Surinder Sahota

He then transferred to Geotechnical Operations, Geophysics section as an engineering aide working on crews doing resistivity and seismic work.

In 1981 Charlie became an engineering assistant in the Rockwork section, which over the years evolved into supervising Rockwork contracts.

From 1989 to the present he has held the position of Regional Operations Technician for the South Coast Region.

We congratulate Charlie on his retirement after 27 years of public service with the ministry and know he will now enjoy more time at his hobby of coaching minor hockey and enjoying his extended family.

Surinder Sahota – 35 Years of Service

Surinder Sahota was born in Ludhiana, India, one of eight children and has been married to Jaswinder for 32 years. They have two sons: Paul, who is studying to become a doctor and soon to be married; and Kanwal, who studies computer science.

Surinder was educated in civil engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur and began his career with the ministry in 1969 in the South Coast Region's Paving Branch. In 1974 he entered the Engineer-In-Training program, giving him the opportunity to learn more about the ministry by working in various business units. Surinder became a professional engineer in 1977 and served as Assistant Regional Paving Engineering from 1978 to 1985.

He then assumed duties of Regional Manager of Paving until 1991, when he became Seismic Planning Engineer and then Quality Assurance Engineer. Since 1998, Surinder has been completing his ministry career as Regional Project Manager in Burnaby.

Upon retiring, Surinder plans to travel to India and on his return, turn to his interest in real estate development.

He takes with him our best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement.

Allan Davidson – 25 Years of Service

Allan Davidson was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, one of three children and has been married to Jennifer for 17 years. They have one daughter, Katie.

Allan attended the University of Toronto earning a degree in Engineering. He began working for the Ministry in 1979 in Prince George as the Regional Geotechnical and Materials Engineer, working on Tumbler Ridge, Fort St. John and Bella Coola projects.

In 1987, he moved to Nanaimo during the Vancouver Island Highway Project as Regional Manager, Professional Services. Since 2002, as Regional Manager, Planning and Partnerships for the South Coast Region, Allan has had a busy time with major projects getting underway and dealing with cross border improvement projects.

We take this opportunity to wish Allan and Jennifer a happy and healthy retirement and trust he will have more time to enjoy skiing, gardening and other outdoor activities together with a planned trip in the future to the U.K.

Hired equipment web site is up!

Submitted by Mark Wong, Project Manager

I've been working with representatives from each district to find additional business process improvements for the Hired Equipment (HE) program. The focuses in this round of process improvements were: (1) refining/improving some of the forms associated with the program; (2) better educating the equipment owners/operators and supervisors on the administrative procedures associated with HE; and (3) making the forms and information available to the public from the ministry's Internet site. Specifically, we worked on:

- refining the HE timecard so that it's now weekly (it will be a gradual transition to the new timecard, as most districts plan on using up existing stock first);
- refining the HE invoice template (so that it now more closely matches the new timecard);
- refining the HE dump truck and other equipment registration forms;
- providing instructions on how to fill out the timecard, invoice, and registration forms; and
- developing an overview of the HE procedures, seniority in particular.

These forms and instructions are now available for the public to download at http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/hired-equipment/hiredequip.htm.

Internally, these same forms and instructions are also availabe via the ministry Intranet at http://gww.th.gov.bc.ca/gwwprocurement/content/home/daylabour/daylabour.asp.

As you can imagine, with the number of districts involved and the geographical variances in procedures, it was quite a challenge to come to consensus on these

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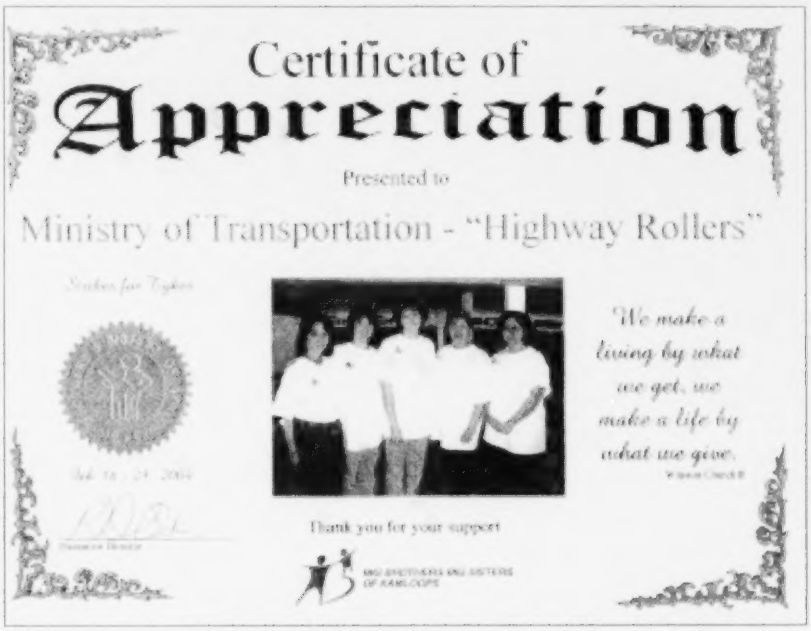

Certificate of
Appreciation
Presented to
Ministry of Transportation - "Highway Rollers"
Strikes for Tykes
Thank you for your support
"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

Community Supporters

The Highway Rollers from the Southern Interior regional office in Kamloops bowled for Strikes for Tykes and raised $784. Left to Right: Crystal Chenier, Corinne Chartrand, Susan Ingram, Penny Radies and Carla Swanson.

Roberta Holdener, of the Rocky Mountain District's Revelstoke office, retired after 29 years of public service. Roberta is pictured here with her husband Dave, son Colin and District Manager, Transportation, Jack Bennetto (centre).

Early start helps boost avalanche awareness

Submitted by Steve Brushey, Assistant Avalanche Technician, Skeena District

Steve Brushey with students learning about avalanche safety

Given the high profile of avalanches in the media last winter, the staff of the ministry's Northwest Snow Avalanche Program took a proactive approach by introducing their program to a young audience.

Steve Brushey, Assistant Avalanche Technician for the Terrace-based Northwest Program, developed a 30-minute Powerpoint presentation designed to inform both elementary and high school students how the Ministry of Transportation Snow Avalanche Program operates and to provide a basic introduction to snow avalanche phenomena.

Overall, a total of 35 high school students and 120 elementary school students in Terrace and Hazelton had the opportunity to see the presentation. Steve received very positive feedback from both students and teachers, and the questions they posed demonstrated a genuine interest in the Snow Avalanche Program. Most people understood very little about snow avalanche phenomena yet wanted to know more.

As recognized by the Canadian Avalanche Association, the key to raising avalanche awareness is by educating the general public. By targeting a young and impressionable audience in the northwest, this process is gaining momentum.

Given the popularity of the presentation, requests for the information session have come in from other local schools. The Northwest Snow Avalanche Program plans to continue to deliver these presentations as time (and of course weather) permits!

International Recognition

The Ministry of Transportation and Len Sielecki, Environmental Issues Manager, along with ICBC, have received more well-deserved recognition for work in mitigating animal-vehicle collisions, this time by the Wildlife Management Institute in Washington, D.C.

In March, Len received a letter from the institute's Wildlife Program Coordinator advising that the ministry and ICBC had been "nominated for their work on initiatives to both reduce animal-vehicle collisions and maintain habitat connectivity in British Columbia," and were among the finalists considered for the Wildlife Management Institute's 2004 Touchstone Award. This award is presented annually to honour a natural resource professional or group of professionals in the public or private sector for exceptional ingenuity and tenacity involved in a program or action that has advanced the cause of sound resource management and conservation within the past several years. Sylvan Consulting Ltd. submitted the nomination.

The letter concludes by saying, "Unfortunately, the Institute only presents one of these awards annually and another nominee was chosen. However, I want to personally congratulate your team for your fine work... The selection was a difficult choice and I can assure you that your nomination received careful consideration and very high marks."

Web site improves hired equipment practices

(Continued from page 17)

items. Although many others were involved in reviewing various documentation, I believe the following people deserve special mention for the time they put in to get to this point: Carol Espey, Loretta Carlson, Sharon Beck, JoAnne Harder, Gwyn Laybourne, Carol Woykin, Kareen Peters, Elaine Owen, Marlene Keehn, Libby Dorey, Leona Constantineau, Kim St. Peter, Karen Andrews, Julie Willsie, Hali Davenport and Ashok Bhatti.

So, please have a look at the content of these sites when you get a chance. We consider this a first step at increasing HE's web presence and we envision the website will evolve over time. If you have any questions about the site or its contents, don't hesitate to contact me or any of the people listed above.

Added thoughts

Some quotes come along from time to time that are worth considering, like this:

"Change forces choices. If we're on the grow, we'll embrace many changes and find the positive in them. It's all in where we choose to put our focus. Even change that hits us on the side of the head as a major crisis can be full of growth opportunities – if we choose to look for them."

- Jim Clemmer

New appointments around B.C.

Bulkley-Stikine District

Gerry Nelson, Area Manager, Roads, in Burns Lake, is new to the ministry.

Mike Hovde has found a permanent home as the Operations Manager after an acting position in Region 2.

Rob Blackburn, Assistant Area Manager, Smithers, is new to the ministry.

Randy Grelson is back in the North as Area Manager, Roads, in Smithers after a stint in Region 1.

South Coast Region

Patrick Livolsi, Regional Manager, Engineering

Jay Dunbar, Regional Manager, Project Delivery

Pat Cruickshank, Regional Manager, Programming, Partnerships

Headquarters

John Coombs, Manager, Traffic Data Program, Planning

From Left to Right: Matt Choquette - Project Management Technician; Ben Wu - EIT Geotechnical and Materials Engineering; Andy Braacx - Regional Supervisor, Highway Design and Survey Engineering; Nancy Priddle - Electrical Consultant Liaison Technician

Bruce McAllister, Director, Project Operations & Transition

New appointments around B.C.

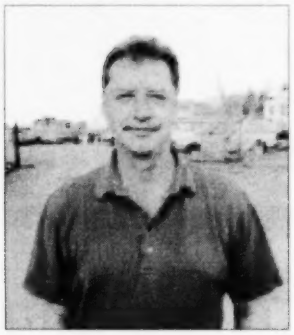
Southern Interior Region

Bruce Lintott returns to Naskusp

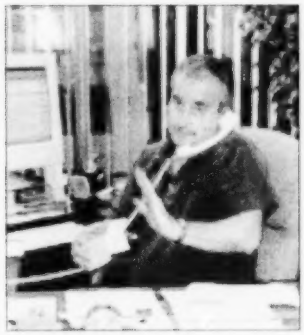
Darren Lincoln – Regional Manager, Property Services (replacing Virginia Currie)

Deb Luison – Property Management/ Land Survey Coordinator (previously held by Mark Collins)

Frank Dacho – Senior Project Manager (replacing Barrie LeBlond)



Wayne Fraser



Grant Lachmuth

Wayne Fraser started with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Paving Branch in 1977 as an auxillary for his first two years. He was an Engineering Aide 1-1 at the time, but 26 years later, he's still here.

His full 26-year career has been based out of Kamloops and spent with the Paving Branch/Field Services. He moved to full-time work with the ministry in January 1979, was appointed to a paving assistant position in 1991 and became an Acting Paving Supervisor from 1997 to 2002. In the winter of 2002, he was appointed Paving Project Supervisor, and earlier this year he was named Manager, Surfacing Operations.

Grant Lachmuth is the new District Manager for the ministry's Okanagan-Shuswap District. He has been with the ministry for 27 years, of which 11 (1977-1988) were with Geotechnical & Materials Engineering as the Roadway Design Technician, then 3 1/2 years (1988-1991) as an Area Manager, Roads, with Fort George District.

Grant's first District Highways Manager posting was to Lakes District from 1991 to 1993, then he was transferred to North Cariboo District from 1993 to 2000. Later, he transferred to Fort George District, where he stayed until this March, when he was transferred to the Okanagan-Shuswap District. With the new job there as District Manager, Grant moved to Kelowna with his wife, Beth. He has two grown children. Rachel, 24, is attending Okanagan University College, and Erik, who's 22, is working in Kamloops.

Over the years, Grant has also worked on a number of special projects at the ministry's headquarters, including various maintenance contract renewal processes, records/forms management and the TRIM pilot. Grant's long service with the ministry may be no coincidence: It turns out his father, Al Lachmuth, worked for the ministry for 20 years himself, from 1959 to 1979, in the Victoria Geotech & Materials office.

New appointments around B.C.

Southern Interior Region

Mark Collins, Aboriginal Coordinator

Norm Parkes – Regional Manager, Planning and Partnerships (replacing Pete Puhallo)

Skeena District

Pat Marhauer

Randy Penner

Skeena District welcomed Pat Marhauer to the ministry on March 8. Pat comes to us from the Ministry of Human Resources where she worked as a Client Service Worker for the past six years. Pat brings us a wealth of experience from the Ministry of Forests, Thornhill Nursery and BCBC. Pat arrived in Terrace 16 years ago. In addition to volunteering for the Terrace Victims Assistance Program, Pat's time outside of work is taken up with her husband Ron and Jackie, their Jack Russell terrier.

Randy Penner came back to Terrace March 1 as District Operations Manager. He joined the ministry 25 years ago in Richmond, arriving in Terrace as a Bridgeman 2 in 1981 & becoming Bridge Crew Supervisor in 1986. After privatization, Randy left to join the local maintenance contractor for nine months, rejoining the ministry in 1989 as our Bridge Area Manager. Randy just completed a 10-month appointment with Bulkley-Stikine District as their Acting District Operations Manager.

Northern Region

Kevin Richter, Regional Director

Starting a new job can be intimidating.

The situation can be made less stressful when new employees feel comfortable with their new surroundings and new colleagues.

In turn, existing employees need to know who this new person is in their midst, i.e. what is the person's name, where are they from, and what will they be doing?

In that spirit, here are a few necessary details about Kevin Richter, the new Regional Director, Northern Region:

- Born in Fairview, Alberta
- Grew up in Burnaby, BC
- Lived in Nanaimo, Calgary, Nelson, Terrace, Kamloops
- Married with two children: Kegan is 7, Mairi is 9
- Hobbies include snowboarding, rock climbing and white water paddling
- Earned BASC at UBC in 1987
- Masters of applied science in Civil Engineering 1992 from UBC
- 1987-1990 - worked for Agra Engineering
- 1992 - joined Ministry of Transportation. Since joining the ministry, Kevin has worked as a Roadway Design Engineer, Geotechnical Engineer, Regional Geotech and Materials Engineer, and Manager Design Survey and Construction. He has also worked as Geotechnical Coordinator for Cache Creek to the Rockies Program, Manager Engineering, Terrace and most recently as the District Manager, Transportation, Okanagan-Shuswap.
- Named Regional Director March 29, 2004

All roads lead to special places

Submitted by Ron Wiebe,
Project Information Officer, Prince George

I bought my first camera when I was 12 years old. You might say my dad drove me to it. He was a terrible photographer! Having endured countless hours of watching terrible slide shows (Dad showed every slide he shot, regardless of the outcome), I was pretty sure I could do better.

Ever since, I've been taking pictures and honing my skills. Now that I've joined the digital age, I'm shooting more than ever. Hey, you can always toast the ones that don't make the grade later, and you don't have to pay for developing!

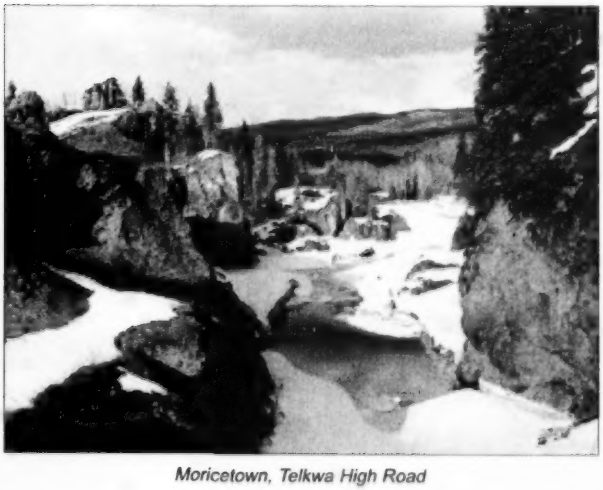
Getting the perfect shot requires an eye for composition allright, but really, it's a matter of being in the right place at the right time. When the lighting's just right, a common, everyday scene becomes striking and, if you're lucky, extraordinary! And now, with the digital darkroom at one's fingertips, there's really no limit to one's artistry—if you're that way inclined. Personally, I spend enough time in front of a computer at work; I'd rather be out shooting!

My work in the vast Northern Region allows me to see a LOT of countryside! And, as if that weren't enough, in the summer, I test roads (and the scenery) through the Okanagan and the Kootenays.

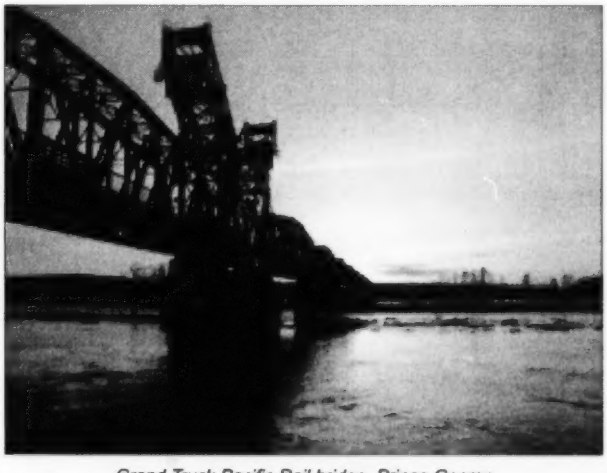
All of these recent photos presented here, incidentally, are completely natural. I've got my share of bad pictures too, but I'll spare you the anguish.

The cutbanks on the Nechako River, Prince George

Canfor frozen evening, Prince George



Moricetown, Telkwa High Road



Grand Truck Pacific Rail bridge, Prince George

Thompson River retaining wall renewed

Submitted by Reg Lawrence, Project Manager

The grand old wall is tumbling down. After 40 years of service, this 1.36-km long metal bin retaining wall, located on Highway 1 along the Thompson River approximately 11 km west of Spences Bridge, is getting a facelift.

The design life of the Armco Metal Bin retaining wall was 25 years. The wall achieved that and then some. In recent years, numerous patches of varying sorts have been applied to prolong its life.

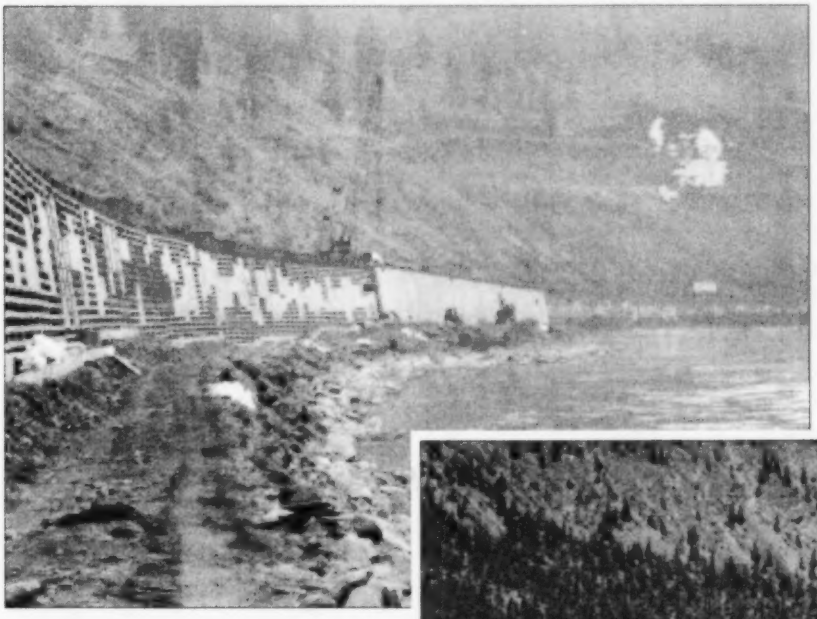
Construction of the new wall began in December 2003 to install pre-cast, reinforced concrete wall panels in front of the old wall. The $6.1-million contract, awarded to IOTA Construction Ltd. of Chilliwack, will require two construction seasons to complete.

The north half of the wall currently under construction is just being completed this spring.

Construction will be suspended for this year's freshet, with work to resume as early as September 2004 on the remaining portion of the wall.

Each wall panel, approximately three metres wide and ranging in height from two metres to 8.5 metres, will be anchored in place with soil anchors drilled through the old metal bins, into the road fill.

Riprap (large boulders) will be placed to an elevation above the base of the new wall to protect the foundation from erosion. Highway 1 will benefit from additional road width. The design life of the new wall is 75 years.



Everything old is new again. Photos show the process - and progress - of work to upgrade the old metal bin retaining wall. The new wall will be good for 75 years.